



Charles Sturt
University



Gender Equity at Charles Sturt

Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate Scholarship

In August, The Morrison Government awarded a record 25 scholarships to women studying Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) at 13 universities across Australia.

The scholarships are a key initiative under the 'More, Together – Defence Science and Technology Strategy 2030'. The program is aimed at encouraging high-performing women to continue their studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and boost representation and job opportunities in the workforce. Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said Defence continued to lead the nation in promoting STEM workforce diversity, with the Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate scholarships playing a significant role in building the talent pipeline.

Charles Sturt had two successful recipients, Bushra Khan (studying Bachelor of Information Technology) and Selina Phillis (Bachelor of Geospatial Science). Below is a Q&A spotlighting Selina in recognition of this achievement. Selina was born in Newcastle, and currently lives in Adelaide, studying online at Charles Sturt. Selina received an Executive Dean's Award in 2020.

What impact are you hoping to make on your community/the world with your degree?

As a student studying a Bachelor of Geospatial Science with a minor in Emergency Management, there are an enormous range of fields that my degree can be applied to.

GIS applications range from contributing to climate change policy by monitoring environmental degradation, to agriculture assessments, live emergency management mapping, and even to domestic and international security applications.

Whichever field I end up in, I'll be helping to inform decision making up to the highest levels by providing private and/or government entities with high quality spatial data in digestible formats.

What drew you to that field?

I've always had a love of puzzles, problem solving, and analysis of environments and people. Geospatial analysis provides a rewarding fusion of these interests while incorporating a mapping element - every project poses its own challenge to be solved, how to convert the raw data or imagery into a product that can be analysed to give information. Many years prior to taking on this degree, in my volunteer role with the State Emergency Service, I explored some of the possibilities of GIS platforms to successfully predict water inundation in our local community. We then used these predictions to educate householders in at-risk areas on how to prepare prior to weather events.

What made you apply for the scholarship?

My key reasons for applying for the Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate Scholarship are the opportunities for workplace learning through STEM placements with Defence, mentoring by professionals in STEM, and the chance to build networks within the field. As a leader in employment of GIS professionals, the chance to get

hands on experience within Defence is the real stand out for me.

How will receiving this scholarship help?

The financial aspect of the scholarship relieves some of the work pressures, allowing me more time to focus on study. More importantly, the work placement provides unique real-world training and engagement with a chance to build relationships. The combination of these factors means that on graduation, I will be a graduate with a high level of academic achievement, work experience, and already formed industry networks.

What motivated you to start studying – why did you choose Charles Sturt?

With a background predominantly in psychiatric nursing, the choice to make such a significant career change was always going to provide some challenges. As an adult learner, Charles Sturt's capacity for totally online education offered the flexibility to study and maintain my community commitments, such as volunteering with the SES and DRA. In addition to this, Charles Sturt offers a truly unique program of study in its Geospatial Science degree - something that isn't widely available within Australia as a standalone program. The academics teaching the core subjects are all GIS professionals or researchers with different focus areas.

We wish Selina all the best for her studies and work in the STEM space!



Intersectionality Webinar

Cate Thomas and Colleen Macmillan discussed and illustrated the power of intersectionality as a lens to enhance equity, inclusion and belonging, using an intersectional model through which to centre and contextualise structures and culture that frame individual experience. Using an intersectional lens facilitates a strengths-based understanding of lived experience that assist organisations and individuals to flip the script away from a narrative of deficit thinking

that marginalises those at the edges of traditional hegemonic hierarchical narratives and economies of value. Taking an Intersectional approach informs an ecological appreciation of diversity that in workplaces and educational and health or other institutional settings can inform opportunities for a dialogic recognition of unique knowledges skills and perspectives and creates opportunity for rich engagement and co-creation of new diverse cultural forms and agency that create possibilities of inclusion for all.

The recording can be found [here](#).

Social Equality Intersectionality and Inclusion Research Group (SEIRG)

The SEIRG Research Group was formally launched mid-2021. The group is co-convened by Cate Thomas and Jay Phillips and is currently in the co-design and co-creation phase of the project to establish a strong foundation that will enhance research collaborations on Intersectionality. One key goal of SEIRG is to increase the breadth and depth of knowledge of how intersectionality theories can contribute to practice that impact organisational and institutional strategies for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

For details please contact Cate Thomas cthomas@csu.edu.au or visit the website currently under development: [Social Equality Intersectionality & Inclusion Research Group \(csu.domains\)](#)

Decolonising Ecologies Webinar

Peta Jeffries presented a masterful webinar on the way some Indigenous histories have been rendered invisible in dominant colonial narratives of Australian history, culture, and landscape.

Through engagement with decolonising knowledge ecologies of Yindymarra Winhanganha, Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and Indigenist Standpoint Pedagogy, Peta explored her own experience excavating family history, art, and work to expose misrepresentations in the myths of Australian history.

[Link to the recording.](#)

[Link to the feedback form](#)

[Link to a Padlet for ongoing discussion and links to relevant resources](#)

Please email pjeffries@csu.edu.au with Decolonising Ecologies in the subject, if you would like to be added to the group who have expressed interest in further discussion.





Bluestocking Week 2021

On the 19th August, in collaboration with the Senior Women's Forum, Equity & Diversity/Athena SWAN, we held a panel discussion to mark Bluestocking Week.

Bluestocking Week is held annually in August and is named for the first generations of university women of the 19th century who grabbed the term and, even as it was used by their opponents as a derogatory dismissal of their achievements, proudly wore it as a badge of serious scholarship. More information on Bluestocking Week can be found [here](#).

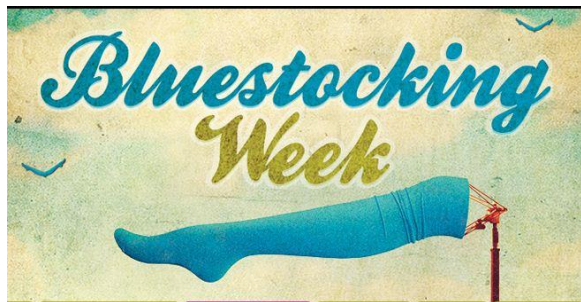
The panel discussion expanded on the panel discussion held in previous years, and the topic was on the Successes and Challenges of Female Academics from diverse backgrounds.

The discussion was moderated and guided by Rylee Dionigi (SWF Co-Convenor), and the panel consisted of



-  Professor Juanita Sherwood - Pro Vice-Chancellor, First Nations Engagement
-  Dr Nicole Sugden - School of Psychology
-  Professor Suzanne McLaren - School of Psychology
-  Associate Professor Marta Hernandez-Jover - School of Agriculture, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences

We thank these wonderful people for their honest insights and sharing their experiences with us.


The session was recorded and can be found [here](#).





What's Happened: Intersectional/Gendered Lens – Local Digest by Clare Ellis


-  The senate passes into legislation two days of miscarriage leave for parents in a slowly growing movement toward women's health needs being recognised in workplace entitlements. Read more [here](#).
-  Superannuation law reforms passed this week will now allow divorcing partners access to superannuation information and it is anticipated that this new transparency will improve equity and outcomes for


women in divorce settlements. Read more [here](#).

-  Disappointingly the Respect at Work Bill passed through parliament only legislating for 6 of 55 recommended reforms by Kate Jenkins to enshrine protection from sexual harassment at work. The new laws criminalise sexual harassment and provide a minimal time framework of two years within which sexual harassment claims can be pursued and stopped well short of expectations. Further links [here](#) and [here](#).

-  There are powerful arguments to embed hybrid workplace flexibility as a workplace right: research from the Victorian Human Rights Commission showing 85% of workers want to maintain hybrid flexibility as a workplace right that can enhance gender equity as well as contributing to environmental sustainability. Read more [here](#).

-  The National Women's Summit was held in Canberra with unclear outcomes for resolving violence against women and there have been renewed calls for an Indigenous Women's framework to meet address disproportionate violence and discrimination faced by First Nations Women. Read more [here](#).

-  One of the key highlights of the summit has been Champion Grace Tame's vocal advocacy for consistent state and federal definitions around sexual violence and consent. See more [here](#).

-  Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) continues calls for the government to address pressing issues of Economic Security for Women: these include calls to raise Centrelink benefits to above poverty levels and abolition of punitive ParentsNext targeting sole parents and the Cashless Welfare Card. See more [here](#).

Women's Health Week

Women's Health Week is a week dedicated to all women across Australia to make good health and wellbeing a priority. Women's Health Week is the time to do something for your health and start making positive changes that can last a lifetime. Now in its 9th year, Women's Health Week ran from the 6th – 10th September.

Each day of the week was dedicated to a different theme:

[Monday: Move it Monday!](#)

This day was about taking small steps in the right direction, learning how much you need to move to be healthy, 'life-hacks' for working from home and a live fitness class!

Tuesday: Tricky periods

Tuesday was about bringing attention to tricky periods, a women's health topic that we need to hear more about; learning the ins and out of your menstrual cycle and busting some myths about what's 'normal' and what's not..

Wednesday: Private lives

Talking about sex and relationships for women of all ages, WHW took a close look at the ebb and flow of libido (sex drive), and how to navigate the waves of changes, plus heard from the experts on how to have a better conversation around sex and sexuality.

Thursday: Mind matters

Mental health in the age of COVID was the focus for day 4. WHW sat down with the experts to talk about how we find our new mental health 'normal' in a pandemic world.

Friday: Slumber party


Sleep was in the spotlight as WHW unpacked the importance of sleep for women's health, the impact of sleep disorders and the facts about sleep deprivation among women.

For more information, please visit the [Women's Health Week website](#).



Want to know more about gender equity?

Gender equity and equity more broadly encompass a wide range of issues, stories and challenges both here at Charles Sturt and across our communities. The following articles and resources give an insight into some of these issues and stories.

 [Australian Research Council \(ARC\): New interactive gender data visualisations and Gender Equality Statement](#)

The ARC has released two new [interactive gender data visualisations](#) and the [ARC Gender Equality Statement](#). The visualisations show participation of investigators on ARC grant applications by gender, career age, fields of

research and more. For the first time, you can see information on participation and success rates by gender at the university level. The ARC Gender Equality Statement sets out the ARC's vision for gender equality, and support for women in the Australian research sector.

 [Equal Pay Day](#)

Two articles relating to Equal Pay Day, which was the 31st August 2021, highlighting the rise of the gender pay gap. [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) and [Women's Agenda](#).

 [Juggling work and home learning](#)

This article discusses feeling tired and burnt out as parents juggle work and home learning during lockdown. It must be noted that women report more burnout and exhaustion than male counterparts. Grattan Institute Report: [Women's Work: The impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women](#).

Key Dates

There are lots of events and activities planned to support and promote gender equity at Charles Sturt. In addition to those activities listed below, keep an eye out for announcements in What's New and check for updates on the Gender Equity [webpage](#).

10th October

[World Mental Health Day](#)

October

[Mental Health Month](#)

**12th-19th
November**

[Trans* Awareness Week](#)

**25th Nov-10th
Dec**

[16 Days of Activism](#)

3rd December

[International Day of People with Disability](#)

December

[Gender Equity at Charles Sturt Newsletter Published](#)

For more information or to get involved please contact the team at: genderequity@csu.edu.au



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